

Kentucky Teacher

November 2009

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Art teacher Susan Tipton helps 6th-grade student Cody Brandenburg with his Fauve-style painting at Lee County Middle School. Photo by Amy Wallot

60 percent of schools make all NCLB goals

The Kentucky Department of Education recently released data related to schools' and districts' status under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and results of the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) administered in the 2008-09 school year.

NCLB status

Data indicates that 60.2 percent – 696 – of Kentucky's 1,157 public schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the 2008-09 school year under NCLB requirements. In 2007-08, 72.9 percent of schools made AYP. A rise in reading and mathematics goals likely contributed to a lower percentage of schools making AYP in 2008-09 than in 2007-08.

Of the 461 schools that did not make AYP, 228 made 80 percent or more of their goals. Statewide, 76 percent – 19 – of the 25 target goals were met.

For the 2008-09 school year, reading goals rose an average of 7.74 points, and mathematics goals rose an average of 10.09 points.

NCLB requires that assessment results be made available and AYP determinations be made prior to the start of the next school year. For the 2008-09 results, Kentucky received approval from the United States Department of Education to delay the release of results. The delay was granted due to the impact of multiple natural disasters in 2008-09 on state test administration.

Kentucky Core Content results

Results of the 2009 administration of the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT), compared to 2008, show increases in the percentage of students scoring at the highest performance levels (proficient and distinguished) in nearly every subject and grade level. *See accompanying chart on this page for specific test results.*

Senate Bill 1, enacted in the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, creates a three-year interim period (2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11) and a new state assessment program beginning in 2012. The interim period allows Kentucky time to develop the new assessment system while maintaining components necessary for federal NCLB reporting.

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=09NCLB

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=09KCCT

Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient/Distinguished on KCCT

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Elementary School Level | | | |
| Reading | 72.72 | 72.65 | 73.54 |
| Mathematics | 61.71 | 69.52 | 70.27 |
| Science | 66.15 | 68.94 | 69.98 |
| Social Studies | 61.60 | 59.68 | 61.11 |
| Writing On-Demand | 53.37 | 52.62 | 55.37 |
| Middle School Level | | | |
| Reading | 66.32 | 66.81 | 66.92 |
| Mathematics | 51.85 | 56.96 | 60.92 |
| Science | 55.95 | 59.57 | 62.72 |
| Social Studies | 52.64 | 57.82 | 55.80 |
| Writing On-Demand | 41.92 | 39.48 | 42.06 |
| High School Level | | | |
| Reading | 60.15 | 60.01 | 61.84 |
| Mathematics | 39.30 | 38.53 | 41.19 |
| Science | 41.65 | 41.28 | 41.22 |
| Social Studies | 43.74 | 38.42 | 40.68 |
| Writing On-Demand | 19.79 | 29.73 | 34.97 |



Photo by Amy Wallot

Computer learning

Title I teacher Hannah Stark watches the progress of 1st-grade students Ashlynn Stevens and Carl Girth as they work in the Fast ForWord program at Murray Elementary School (Murray Independent). The program – which works with skills including letter names and sounds, comprehension and phonemic awareness – is individually tailored to a student's grade level. Each child is placed at the skill level they need and progress independently through the program.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

School improvement requires communication, support

With the recent release of data related to schools' and districts' status under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and results of the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) administered in the 2008-09 school year, I'm reminded of Kentucky's continued focus on our statewide strategy to address low-performing schools. While Kentucky public schools are making improvements every year, the data show we still have work to do.



Holliday

Proposed guidelines for federal School Improvement Grants, which are a component of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, were recently posted. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan is using the federal Title I programs to focus on low-performing schools.

This infusion of funding and recent changes to Kentucky testing programs will require the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to review our strategies for addressing low-performing schools. Let me share just a few highlights of the proposed guidelines.

Kentucky will have to change its methods for identifying low-performing schools to a focus on the federal definitions. The proposed guidelines are as follows:

- **Tier 1 schools** – these are the lowest-achieving 5 percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring in the state. Funds must be used in this category first.
- **Tier 2 schools** – these are low-achieving middle or high schools that qualify for Title I programs, but are not classified as Title I schools.
- **Tier 3 schools** – these are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring that are not in the lowest five percent of Title I schools.

The funds behind this effort must be spent within four options that are being proposed.

- **Option 1** – Turnaround model includes replacing the principal and at least 50 percent of staff with a new governance structure and new instructional program.
- **Option 2** – Restart model requires closing the school and reopening under a charter school management or other educational management organization.
- **Option 3** – Close school model simply means that the school is closed and students are sent to another school.
- **Option 4** – Transformation model consists of four very specific components with 11 non-negotiable standards.

This program, along with our Race to the Top application, can provide a new approach to supporting low-performing schools. The program requires academic goals that must be met within the three-year period and annual progress goals.

I have every confidence that Kentucky can bring every school to proficiency by 2014. However, I also know you simply can't do it alone. There are existing resources avail-

able from the staff at KDE that provide a framework for improving student learning and for selecting and implementing strategies to improve the instructional and organizational effectiveness of every school. These include assistance directly to schools, school/district audits and reviews, and an instructional support network. But there also are opportunities for improvement in what we provide you.

Two critical aspects to school improvement are KDE's support of our teachers and my approach of visibility, communication and listening. Everything we do at a state level affects how you do your job, and with all that is being asked of you, communication and feedback from you is more important than ever. To that end, I have directed KDE staff to revive the Commissioner's Teacher Advisory Council and have it join the superintendent, parent and principal advisory councils. I need to hear from one of the most important groups – classroom teachers – and any method by which I can collect feedback from

you is one I plan to use, including the advisory councils, webinars and social media.

Over the coming months, I will be working with KDE staff, the Kentucky Board of Education, legislators and other interested parties to focus on our statewide strategy to address low-performing schools. We must work to continue to raise achievement and close academic performance gaps. Our children, our communities and our state will reap the benefits from this work both now and in the future.

Common Core standards

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have begun releasing the college- and career-readiness standards as part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a process being led by governors and chief state school officers in 51 states and territories. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs.

The NGA Center and CCSSO will soon begin the process of developing the K-12 standards that will enable students to meet the validated college- and career-readiness standards. Visit www.corestandards.org to view the standards and provide feedback.

This is the first step in providing a clearer roadmap to academic success for students in every grade level. These standards are being written with you in mind, so your feedback is vital to ensuring the standards are ones that enable students to succeed both in the classroom and beyond.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Unusual sounds

Music teacher Kendra Abner teaches 1st-grade students at Southgate Elementary School (Southgate Independent) how to make sounds using parts of their bodies at. Abner's students listen to and explore how changing different elements results in different musical effects.

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Board recognizes two volunteer groups that help students

By Matthew Tungate

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Two church-based programs that work to help minority students were recognized by the Kentucky Board of Education at its October meeting.

The state board presented the annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to the Arriba Niños (Upward Children) program in Shelbyville and the First Baptist Church Bracktown in Fayette County.

Since 2004, the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award has been conferred on an individual or groups in Kentucky for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students.

"The traits of both of these programs – leadership, commitment and service – are the hallmarks of Dr. Robinson's remarkable career as an advocate for all children," Board Chair Joe Brothers said. "Upon his retirement from the board, it was the intention of his colleagues to honor him, to call attention to others in our state who share his passion for equity and opportunity in education and to pledge continuing support for their efforts."

The Arriba Niños program was nominated by the Shelby County school district. The program, which provides homework and tutoring assistance to Hispanic students, was formed by the Catholic Church of the Annunciation, First Presbyterian Church, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Centenary United Methodist Church in 2003.

The churches recruit volunteers from their congregations to help children with English language literacy skills. Volunteers strive to provide one-on-one assistance to each student. Arriba Niños provides tutoring and homework assistance to 2nd through 8th graders for a minimum of six weeks in the fall and spring semesters. Administrators from the Shelby County school system have helped the program's leaders fine-tune the program and identify students who could benefit from it.

Shelby County's Hispanic stu-



Photos by Amy Wallot

The First Baptist Church Bracktown received the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award from the Kentucky Department of Education. Pictured are (back row) Roger Cleveland, far left, Roszalyn Akins, James Hardin, center, Arnav Wheat, right, and Jaynae Laine; (front row) Derek King, left, Samuel Robinson, center, and George Livingston. The church launched the Future Black Males Working program and the Growth Education Motivation Success (GEMS) program for students in the Fayette County school district.



Kentucky Board of Education Chair Joe Brothers presents the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to Sydney Lawson, far left, Patricia Bland, left, Joanne Burke, center, and Faun Fishback of Arriba Niños (Upward Children). The program, formed by four Shelby County churches in 2003, provides homework and tutoring assistance to Hispanic students in the school district.

dent population has grown from 76 in 1997 to 887 in 2009. Enrollment numbers for Arriba Niños have increased from 15 students and 16 tutors in spring 2003 to an average of 58 students and 60 tutors each week in the spring of

2009. Data indicate that many students who participated in the program have scored at the highest levels on state testing.

The First Baptist Church Bracktown was nominated by the Fayette County school district. The

church launched the Future Black Males Working program, a mentoring academy for African-American males that originated at Leestown Middle School, but now includes students from high schools and middle schools across Fayette County. Every Saturday, participants receive extra academic attention from local educators and community volunteers. The goal is to narrow the achievement gap and place the emphasis in their lives on personal responsibility and studies. In 2008, the Growth Education Motivation Success (GEMS) program was launched to mentor African-American females and their families.

Roszalyn Akins, wife of First Baptist Church Bracktown pastor and state school board member C.B. Akins, said, "This program (Future Black Males Working) truly believes that our mission is to educate, motivate and activate the potential that lies within the African-American male."

During the meeting, board members discussed their legislative priorities for the year. Commissioner Terry Holliday told the board that more needs to be done to help chronically underperforming schools.

"What you've got to do is you've got to impact teacher quality in those schools, and principal leadership," he said.

Kentucky's application for federal Race to the Top funding will focus on low-performing schools, Holliday said. But he won't agree to give schools money without measurable outcomes.

"We're going to have a clear focus on improving teacher quality and effectiveness. We're going

to have a clear focus on improving principal quality and effectiveness," he said.

Holliday said he is going to push for the ability to use a different model for the schools that have struggled for seven or eight years. That includes seeking changes in regulations and legislation to help turn around the lowest performing schools.

"The next six months won't be very pleasant," he said. "There's going to be some tough conversations."

The board also:

- approved the recommended budget priorities submitted by the Kentucky Department of Education (The department is developing the 2010-2012 biennial budget.)
 - accepted the guidelines for operations of advisory boards at the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) and Kentucky School for the Blind, and approved KSD Advisory Board appointments
 - awarded the inaugural Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award – Strive for Achievement Through Instructional Equity to its namesake, Johnnie Grissom, the associate commissioner of the Office of Special Instructional Services
- The board heard presentations on:

- release of data related to the Kentucky Core Content Test and the federal No Child Left Behind Act
- the regulation related to the interim school assessment process
- career and technical education
- the Principal Redesign Project
- end-of-course assessments
- the Individual Learning Plan
- revisions to a regulation related to nutrition and health services
- an update from the Kentucky Center for School Safety

The board's next regular meeting will be Dec. 9 and 10 in Frankfort.

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=KBOE

Singapore Math digs deeper into mathematics learning

By Susan Riddell

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The first time Jennie Hurst took a look at the Singapore Math curriculum, her jaw dropped.

"This approach dives in so much deeper than anything I've ever taught," said Hurst, an eight-year veteran teacher who teaches 3rd graders at Liberty Elementary School (Fayette County). "I looked at some of the questions and thought this was going to take forever for my students to catch on and be successful.

"Well, my students are already proving me wrong and are able to add numbers up to 10,000 mentally," Hurst added. "Last year, I was working tirelessly to get my students to be fluent and master numbers to 1,000. The Singapore Math approach is already providing my students with lifelong strategies that will allow them to both be successful this year and throughout their continued education."

The key element of Singapore Math is building on previous knowledge and the avoidance of repetitive learning. Hands-on manipulatives also are a key component in Singapore Math.

In the Fayette County school district this year, 17 schools are using Singapore Math for the first time.

"It is the American version of the current mathematics curriculum used by primary schools in Singapore," said Natalee Feese, mathematics coordinator for the district. "It builds on mathematics concepts a little at a time, every day.

"Singapore Math has rated tops in the nation in mathematics achievement for more than 12 years," Feese added. "Fayette County Public Schools researched and realized Singapore

Math is on the cutting edge of teaching students mathematics with world-renowned results."

Fayette County isn't the only district using Singapore Math. Marshall County is among the handful of districts using the same concepts.

"Marshall County adopted this curriculum because it provides students with a strong foundation," said Julie Teague, an early primary teacher at Benton Elementary School. "Instead of skimming the surface as in years past, it focuses on teaching fewer concepts (12-15 per year) to a deeper understanding. With past textbook series, teachers taught as many as 30 concepts a year. To cover the content in time, we could not dive deeply into the concepts. Because of this, most students did not master every concept.

"Singapore Math teaches each concept to mastery," Teague added. "The philosophy behind the program is that students gain a deep understanding and develop number sense, which will help them be more successful when entering higher-level mathematics classes at the middle school and high school levels."

Marshall County has implemented Singapore Math in grades K-2. Each upcoming school year the district will add another grade into the mix. Teague said this has made for a smooth transition. That transition, along with students focusing on in-depth learning through the use of manipulatives, has allowed Teague to see immediate results in her classroom.

"In years past, I spent a lot of time on memorization of mathematics facts and facts practice," Teague

said. "I have realized (that) without understanding how numbers work together, number sentences are a very abstract con-

"The heart of the curriculum focuses on problem solving."

— Julie Teague,
Benton Elementary School



Photo by Amy Wallot

Jennie Hurst uses the Singapore Math approach to teaching mathematics with her 3rd-grade students at Liberty Elementary School (Fayette County). The students were learning to add greater numbers by regrouping them into 100s. Schools in Fayette and Marshall counties are using the Singapore Math curriculum during the 2009-10 school year.

cept for students. My 4-year-old can sing her ABCs but she has no idea how those letters connect to make words. Most of our early primary students can count to 100 but have no idea how to make connections between those numbers.

"This year I spent much of the first month building number sense within my students through modalities such as movement, singing, reading, visualization and drawing," Teague added. "By doing this, the students are gaining a deep understanding of how numbers work together and making connections between numbers. Number sense is more than just counting or memorizing facts. A child who has developed number sense has the ability to use numbers quickly and efficiently."

With the in-depth lessons, Teague said the biggest adjustment for her has been putting more time into the planning of these lessons. "The program doesn't allow you to come in and wing it," she said. "The heart of the curriculum focuses on problem solving. Educators normally spend the first month to six weeks re-teaching the previous year's curriculum. Singapore Math teaches so deeply that concepts are revisited but never re-taught. The goal of this program is conceptualization and mastery."

To keep up with the demands in preparation and training, Singapore Math teachers in Fayette County are spending 100 hours

of professional development to get the most out of the program.

Hurst said that while Singapore Math is already making headway in Fayette County, the teachers are quick to realize that there will always be room for improvement.

"Although it is proving to be a phenomenal program, it is not the end-all for our school," Hurst said. "All stakeholders at our school strive each day to teach each child to the highest level that we can. We are direct and systematic with all lessons. With any program there can be holes, and teachers have to have the intrinsic motivation to fill those holes and gaps that are missing.

"Like with any program, teaching it with fidelity is a must," Hurst added. "Singapore Math requires buy in by all, from administration to teachers to assistants. At Liberty, we are eager to earn our 100 hours of professional development, which will allow us to become masters of the program and therefore provide a great opportunity to take all of our students to a different level of mastery in mathematics. This program is a great tool for any teacher's toolbox to help students become successful in their classrooms and for years to come."

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Science teachers tout hands-on approach

By Matthew Tungate

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Science teacher Lisa Klette's 7th- and 8th-grade science room is known as "The Zoo" at Dayton High School (Dayton Independent) because of the three chinchillas, two degus, two turtles, a rat and several types of fish.

The 14-year veteran said she keeps the animals in her room because they provide teaching opportunities.

"When we are learning the features of life, what better way to discuss needs for survival than to talk about what our classroom pets need to survive? When discussing adaptations to survive, the chinchillas provide a perfect example with their fur coats (to survive the cold of the Andes in South America, their native habitat)," Klette said. "The kids really make a connection with the animals, and they also help teach them responsibility."

Making that connection through hands-on activities is a common trait among Klette and three other Kentucky science teachers who were among 34 in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico to receive the 2009 Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. More than 300 teachers in grades K-12 applied for the award.

The winners received \$5,000 cash awards and \$5,000 grants for their schools for the expansion or enhancement of a school science program, science resources or the professional development of the school's science teachers. Nominations are solicited every fall with winners selected based on an innovative science lesson plan; creativity and effectiveness of teaching methods; and the plan for the use of grant money to improve science education resources in their schools.

Klette said she strives to show her students that science is a way of organizing and understanding life, and that they use it every day.

"Hands-on teaching is so effective because science is life, and life is hands-on," she said.

Award-winner Marlon Francis, who teaches 9th-grade integrated science and environmental science at Fern Creek Traditional High School (Jefferson County), believes science is about exploring and discovering, and more learning takes place when students are allowed to explore and discover before teachers give them explanations.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Science teacher Lisa Klette explains an experiment to 7th-grade students at Dayton High School (Dayton Independent). The students were learning about structure and function in connection to animal adaptation.

"Many of our students are tactile, kinesthetic and visual learners, hence the hands-on approach requires using various senses and collaboration with peers," he said. "If elementary and middle school students are taught inquiry skills, then at the high school level, using prior knowledge should help them to grow academically."

Another award recipient, Michael DiEnno, said students often have little background knowledge in science concepts, and providing them with a way to experience some of the more difficult concepts helps their understanding.

"I definitely feel that students should be given a chance to experience any concept in a hands-on fashion, if at all possible," said the 10-year classroom veteran and 5th-grade teacher at Overdale Elementary School (Bullitt County). "I also give students the chance to impress me with their abilities by giving them very challenging tasks that allow for personal growth, as well as growth in a group setting."

The fourth award-winner, Lewis County



Francis



DiEnno



Poeppelman

High School biology and chemistry teacher Sara Poeppelman, strongly endorses "hands-on and minds-on science."

"I feel that having the students 'do' science is extremely important in regard to students truly understanding the nature of science and the fact that it is really problem solving in action," she said. "But more importantly than the hands-on aspect of science is getting the students to embrace the 'minds-on' aspect of figuring out how and why the world works the way that it does."

The teachers were asked to submit an innovative science lesson plan they had successfully used in their classrooms. Those lesson plans will be available on Amgen's Web site in the coming months.

DiEnno said that while he gets some of his ideas from his science background, many

come from books, magazines or online. One example is having 1st graders trace shadows from soda bottles with chalk, and then watching as the shadow moves out of the outline. DiEnno said he found that lesson plan and made a slight modification.

"I often will modify a lesson to suit my class or kids," he said.

Knowing your students is essential for Francis.

"I believe that the key to good science teaching is to observe and analyze your students, then plan lessons that cater to their strengths and weakness," he said. "This means consistently reflecting on all lessons, behaviors and reactions during lessons."

Klette said her goal is getting her students to question everything.

"When developing a new unit, I lay out the core content that needs to be mastered and think, 'How can I let my students experience these concepts? What real-world connections can I make that my students will see as valid in their lives? Can it be fun? Will it be challenging? What resources will we need? Who can I ask for help to develop and carry out this unit?'" she said.

Poeppelman likes to make her students work in reverse. For example, many labs define terms for students and then allow the students to verify results. She prefers to allow students to perform the lab and make observations, analyze the results and develop conclusions.

"This takes more thought on the part of the students, but because of this, students often take ownership of their learning much more frequently, and they tend to develop greater understanding of the content because of these fairly simple switches," she said.

Poeppelman said it goes back to a comment by poet W.B. Yeats, who said, "Education is not the filling of a bucket but the lighting of a fire."

"If I can manage to spark their interest in learning, they can and will be able to accomplish anything that they set out to do," Poeppelman said. "As a teacher, if I can effectively do this for a large percentage of my students, I will be able to call myself a success."

MORE INFO...

www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html

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Tipton shares love of arts with Lee middle, high school students

By Susan Riddell

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Sometimes, all it takes is a pinch.

That did it for Susan Tipton, an art teacher in the Lee County school district who turned that pinch into a successful learning experience for her students.

During the 2008-09 school year, Tipton was scooting up to eat lunch at a table in the library at Lee County High School while holding her chair. She pinched her finger on a chair she said dated back to the 1960s.

Jana Durbin, the library media specialist at the high school, suggested that Tipton and some of the other teachers replace the chairs themselves, and "the idea grew to develop an art project," said Tipton, who called what ensued one of her favorite art projects to date.

For several weeks, Tipton and Durbin hit the yard sale and junk store circuit, as well as accepting donated chairs from faculty.

After amassing a collection enough for the students in her class plus a few extra, the art project began.

"Students had to come up with a theme for their chairs, select the chairs they wanted to work on and sand off the old finish," Tipton said. "They then had to begin painting their designs onto the chairs. They researched images, drew their designs and painted for about two weeks until the chairs were complete.

"When critiquing their work, most of the students loved this project and felt good about leaving a little bit of themselves in the library for others to see and use. They got the point of what art is often about – sacrificing and sharing a bit with others."

Students at the high school also must share Tipton, who has taught art in the district for nine years. Not only does she teach at the high school, but she has spent the last three years teaching at Lee County Middle School as well.

Tipton does this because district staff members have routinely "absorbed" the work formerly held by retiring and relocating personnel due to the already small nature of the district as well as the current economy.

This has left her with many obstacles and a very busy schedule.

"I am currently teaching grades 6 through 12," she said. "I have five different preps a day that equal 25 different and separate lessons by the end of the week. I have lost my advanced level classes at the high school in order to cover all grade levels.

"Being the only teacher at any grade level or subject area is difficult because you have no one to bounce ideas around with or feel connected with," Tipton added. "With the

arts in particular, you have to make many curriculum decisions pretty much on your own because you are the one who knows the subject best, not to mention how you are the only person teaching all levels of the subject matter. Decisions also are made based on how the state is in the process of changing curriculum.

"You save everything from toilet paper rolls to burned-out light bulbs until you get enough to do a project. You have to be very selective on what you spend the limited school funding because you have to have enough supplies to get through a whole year on about \$2.50 per student."

Tipton said that while the downsides are difficult, the positive aspects of her job – like collaborating with fellow teachers in all subjects – more than make up for it.

"She is a dedicated teacher and is passionate about her role in educating students about the arts," David Land, principal of Lee County High, said. "She incorporates a hands-on approach in many assignments and is always willing to work with other teachers on integration projects.

"This past year she has enhanced her arts and humanities programs by letting her students experience real-world projects and aspects of art," Land added, referring to how she obtained grants to take students to museums and universities for educational experiences.

Tipton collaborated with drafting and Spanish teachers last year while studying France as they made jewelry, Mardi Gras masks and wooden models of various items, and they glazed and fired cappuccino mugs, still finding time to study Impressionist and post-Impressionist styles.

The teachers she works with "are committed to doing good things for and with their students, and we have created some great integrated units," Tipton said.

Despite having to differentiate between middle- and high school-aged students, Tipton said she strives to treat them the same.

"I want them to have a respect for others, including those of different cultures and each other, in the classroom," she said. "Because the arts are very personal as well as cultural, students need to appreciate their uniqueness as well as the ties that bind us



Photos by Amy Wallot

Art teacher Susan Tipton gives 6th-grade student Tyler Ross some tips on his Fauve-style painting at Lee County Middle School. Tipton has been teaching in the Lee County school district for nine years.

all together in humanity. Even if they aren't especially 'artistic,' they can still work hard and appreciate and respect those qualities. I think everyone has a creative voice in some form; students just need to have the opportunities to find it.

"Exposure and opportunity in the arts are vital," Tipton added. "My job is always evolving and ever-changing in characteristics and personalities of all of the students and the changing and sometimes very challenging curriculum and technological changes."

Also impacting arts in Kentucky is the transition away from the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System assessment.

"From what I understand, schools will still be assessed, but the manner of that assessment will be different," Tipton said. "I hope that as the state adjusts for the new assessments that help will be available to small districts to compensate for their lack of opportunities to travel and experience such things as art museums, concerts, dances and theatre. Students need the arts just as they need sports, or just as they need any opportunity to grow to become well rounded, hard-working and appreciative adults."

Tipton is definitely helping her students make the most of these opportunities, Land said.

"Susan strives to incorporate the skills of her students in various projects throughout the school year, not only working with the students she teaches, but also working with other classes and teachers whenever she is asked," Land said. "Her enthusiasm and



Tipton's students at Lee County High School painted chairs as a class project for the school's library.

caring personality will influence her students throughout their lives. Our students have definitely been enhanced both educationally and artistically with her talents."

MORE INFO...

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Top programs put ‘education’ in ‘alternative education’

By Matthew Tungate
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Denise Adams, principal of The Providence School in Jessamine County, remembers Kirk as an angry young man, seething with an implosive type of anger that made staff fear the outcome if he should ever fight with someone.

But over the period of two or three years, Kirk became more willing to listen and less angry – and began to learn. His reading scores soared as he began to pay attention in class, and eventually the school had to dismiss him from special education services because he no longer qualified.

“Since graduating in 2005, Kirk has worked at least one job steadily and often has held another part-time job so he could help his wife – his high-school sweetheart – attend college part-time,” Adams said. “After being married for three years, Kirk and his wife have purchased a home and have become the proud parents of a baby girl.”

Kirk’s story is just one that Adams can tell about The Providence School, which was one of six alternative education programs recently designated as Best Practice Sites to recognize the work of educators and programs that serve at-risk students.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) began designating Best Practice Sites this year to highlight exemplary practices in programs that provide services to at-risk students. School districts nominated their programs, and finalists received site visits from a review committee. Each program selected as a Best Practice Site will receive \$1,000 for instructional support and be formally recognized at a meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

A5 Programs are district-operated and district-controlled facilities designed to provide services to at-risk populations with unique needs.

A6 Programs are district-operated instructional programs in non-district-operated institutions or schools serving youth who are state agency children. These youth are the responsibility of the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Community Based Services, and Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services.

The programs were self-nominated in the categories of Academic Performance, Learning Environment and Efficiency. The other five programs named as Best Practice Sites for 2009 are:

- Beacon Central High School (Daviess County) – Best Practice Site in the Learning Environment category
- Brooklawn School (Jefferson County) – Best Practice Site in Efficiency category
- Calloway County Day Treatment – Best Practice Site in all three categories
- Graduation Success Academy (Bath County) – Best Practice Site in the Efficiency category
- Ramey-Estep High School (Boyd County) – Best Practice Site in all three categories

Best Practice Site designation will be awarded annually, according to Nijel Clayton, Secondary Education Branch manager with the Kentucky Department of Education. Districts can begin nominating A5 and A6 programs in early 2010, with reviews finished by April or May, and Best Practice Sites named by the end of the school year.

Clayton said the state estimates more than 45,000 students spend all or some of the year in an A5 program, and there are about 20,000 per year attending A6 programs.

“Those two numbers, if we were to add them together, would constitute Kentucky’s second-largest school district,” she said.

The evaluation for Best Practice Sites is modeled after the state Standards and Indicators for School Improvement, Clayton said.

“We feel that alternative education programs should be like schools, in terms of rigorous content, high-quality instruction – all of those things that people would



Photos by Amy Wallot

Senior Paul Clem writes his name in Arabic during Eric Sowers’ World Civilization class at The Providence School.

normally associate with quality indicators for school,” she said.

A5 and A6 schools also should have more support for behavioral and academic interventions, Clayton said.

“The students are there for a purpose, and our job is to ensure that students in alternative programs are still receiving a high-quality education, the same as any other student,” she said.

The Providence School a model of excellence

The Providence School, which opened in 2002, was recognized in all three categories, but state education officials knew of its excellence well before this year.

The state Department of Education has a DVD about The Providence School that will be used as a training opportunity for outside audience to show the “possibilities of a fully functioning, exemplary alternative education program,” Clayton said.

Among many other traits, the Best Practice Sites review team noted that The Providence School focuses on professional development for its teachers. Students are dismissed early on Fridays to allow for staff collaborative planning time. Students are dismissed for the entire day the last Friday of each month, which allows for five



Travis Spann teaches mathematics to middle school students at The Providence School (Jessamine County). At Providence, students are dismissed early on Fridays to allow for staff collaborative planning time.

hours of training time for teachers and classified staff.

“All teachers either meet the requirement to be highly qualified or are working toward certification,” according to the review. “Staff members use the students’ early release time on Friday for collaboration and training to focus classroom instruction on the school’s goals and objectives.”

Principal Adams said The Providence School, which is an A5 school with a small A6 program designed specifically for teen mothers, is constantly creating and refining programs to address the needs of the students who are currently not succeeding in traditional schools.

“Success is dependent on how well we personalize education for each individual student,” she said. “Therefore, when a new initiative is introduced to our district, we have to learn the same basic information that all educators in Jessamine County have to learn. However, we then have to adapt

the information to make it work with at-risk students.”

For schools that aspire to be Best Practice Sites, Adams suggested they address cultural issues first.

“Even when students are disrespectful, adults must remain calm and respectful. Examine discipline procedures and philosophy, spending time thinking about the goal of discipline. If students believe adults have their best long-term interests in mind when disciplining them, the vast majority will respond positively,” she said. “When discipline becomes a synonym for punishment, students will become angrier, more difficult to manage and more resistant to learning – all responses wise educators do not want to elicit.”

Beacon Central High School promotes community involvement

Beacon Central High School was named a Best Practice Site in the Learning Environment category. The A5 school, which has been open since 1996, accepts students

based on academic, truancy and pregnancy issues.

The review team noted, “The principal has a vision of changing the name of Beacon Central Alternative School to Beacon Central High School in an effort to remove the punitive stigma and community perception of this program.”

Principal Tony Bryant said he and his staff believe that all students can and will succeed given the proper support and encouragement.

“The most important dynamic is the relationship that exists with the student,” he said. “If a student feels a sense of belonging, he or she will succeed.”

The review team saw that an important element of the Beacon Central High culture has been a renewed sense of the students’ role in the community. Last year students hosted a Veterans Day program and raised money for a student with cancer at another school. Students also have been involved in a service project of

beautifying the school grounds by planting flowers; painting the flag pole base and picnic tables in the school colors; and clearing the grounds of debris after two storms.

School staff noted that Beacon Central High staff work with families and the community to remove barriers to learning by providing services such as providing food and clothing; prom dresses; referrals to local health clinics; and an on-site child care center for students’ babies.

“We feel it is important for students and the community to see Beacon as an option for success rather than a ‘place’ to send students that are struggling to earn credits,” Bryant said.

Bryant said he would tell other A5 and A6 schools “to focus on building relationships with students and to look for positives instead of roadblocks.”

Brooklawn School promotes educational excellence

Brooklawn School is an A6 residential facility serving students



Teacher Becky Lynch helps a group of students bake squash during her cooking class at Ramey-Estep High School (Boyd County).

from throughout the state whom various state agencies place into the program. Associate Principal Trish Joyce said many of her students arrive at the school below grade level in reading and mathematics skills due to their movement from facility to facility.

“Our role is to increase their skills and make their school experience academically strong plus trying to provide a ‘wow’ factor for the students through special school projects, field trips and guest speakers,” she said.

The review team was impressed with Brooklawn’s commitment to academics. Its report noted that “the program is equipped with several curriculum/software programs and students have access to (Kentucky’s) Core Content subjects and receive credit toward graduation. The daily school schedule reflects that students receive six hours of instruction and have access to the entire curriculum necessary for their grade placement. Teachers’ class schedules are evidence that the staff makes efficient use of instructional time to maximize student learning.”

The review team also observed that teachers use varied instructional strategies, effective questioning techniques and integration of content. Students are able to participate in an Automobile Mechanics class in a fully functioning garage, and in a Horticulture class complete with a greenhouse.

“The Brooklawn students are given the opportunity to excel



Murray State University police officer Kenny Jenkins, left, and Calloway County Sheriff’s Department Deputy Brandon Gallimore patrol the Calloway County Day Treatment Center. The two agencies, along with the Murray City Police, visit the school frequently and conduct walkthroughs to build positive relationships with students and families.

under the direction and efforts of a staff that has high expectation for each student,” the review team’s report said.

The report also said the staff promotes team planning vertically and horizontally across content areas and grade configurations. Planning consists of 30 minutes each morning, prior to the arrival of students; one hour weekly; and four days included in the school calendar.

“Our school has a committed staff that is willing to work as a team for the success for our students,” Joyce said. “We continue to look at new programs and opportunities to make our school more

academically engaging. We want students to come to school to learn and have a great day where they feel confident and successful.”

Calloway County Day Treatment Center builds positive relationships

Calloway County Day Treatment Center (CCDTC) was recognized in all three areas as a Best Practice Site. One thing the review team noted was the involvement of the community in the A6 school.

“An advisory committee meets quarterly to review policies, procedures, and to refine the overall operation of the program. Outreach

(See **Top** on page 10)

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agencies, for example Big Brothers/Big Sisters, are used to mentor students and families. Murray City Police, Calloway County Sheriff's Department and Murray State University Campus Police visit the facility frequently and conduct walkthroughs to build positive relationships with students and families," the report said.

"Community resources are used to provide programs and learning opportunities for students in the areas of drug awareness and prevention, Internet safety and job applications, and interviewing and shadowing. Furthermore, the superintendent and other central office staff visit the school frequently and demonstrate a caring support for the students."

Facility Director Susan Bucy said community involvement is critical to helping her students.

"Our students are a part of our community, and in order for them to learn to be positive contributors to the community, they need to feel important and valued in it," she said. "Law enforcement is often seen as the enemy to some of our students, but their presence in our building provides a sense of security and stability that all of our students and staff members appreciate and need in their lives."

The review team also noted that CCDTC uses many of the same practices that improve students' learning at traditional schools. Teachers give students opportunities to apply knowledge to real-life situations, integrate multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles, and use a shared lesson-plan template the combines *Program of Studies* and *Kentucky Core Content for Assessment*.

Bucy said CCDTC staff is involved in planning to improve student achievement and to improve program performance. But, it is how staff interacts with each other and with students that is the real key, she said.

"Each staff member chooses to work at CCDTC and has had the opportunity to go to other schools, change positions, etc., if they wanted," Bucy said. "They all want to work at CCDTC because the culture is so positive. The way the staff interacts with each other is a great

benefit for our students because they are able to see appropriate and healthy adult relationships.

Graduation Success Academy starts off right

Graduation Success Academy (GSA) Principal Todd Neace said his school was created to help reduce the number of dropouts in Bath County. Neace, a former football player, is so driven by that goal that he pulled a student out of bed last year when the child's mother said he wouldn't get up.

"I feel that everyone in the state of Kentucky realizes that there is a major problem with dropouts, and there needs to be something done to address the needs of the students we are losing," Neace said. "I feel that Bath County is on the cutting edge of the solution, and we at GSA have developed some innovative ways to address the specific needs of our individual students."

The review team, which named Graduation Success Academy a Best Practice Site in Efficiency, praised the Bath County school district for designing space in the new Bath County High School addition specifically for alternative education. The review team also noted that the A5 program, which began in the 2008-09 school year, works closely with Bath County High School "to provide opportunities for instruction in business, agriculture and Spanish."

"We feel that the students need to learn to interact with all types of people, and they need to be able to work with different teachers for them to be successful later on in life," Neace said.

However, his students usually have difficult home lives and need a smaller environment with one-on-one interaction with teachers, Neace said.

"You really get to know these kids, and they start to respond to that," he said. "It's not a punitive alternative school."

Neace said he would tell other A5 and A6 programs, "I feel that in an alternative setting you can't be afraid of change and if something isn't working then you need to be willing to attack it and change it as necessary. Don't wait until next year or next month – you will lose students by then. You must change immediately."



Photos by Amy Wallot

Calloway County Day Treatment Center 8th-grader William Feckley talks with mathematics teacher Amy Futrell and counselor Tiffany Pitman during a treatment team meeting.

Ramey-Estep High School blends treatment, academics

Ramey-Estep High School is an A6 residential facility serving students with academic, behavioral, social and emotional deficits. The review team noted that the school and Ramey-Estep Homes, the residential treatment facility, have established a comprehensive treatment plan for each student.

"Communication flows both ways so that the youth can perform to the best of their ability in the classroom and within the treatment group. Because Ramey-Estep Homes is a treatment facility, each child receives an individualized treatment plan tailored to his/her personal needs. Each student's educational and treatment plan is reviewed weekly by a Treatment Team composed of the teacher to whom the student has been assigned and Ramey-Estep Homes staff," the report said.

Principal Ann Brewster, in her 47th year in education, said, "We teach our students based upon their treatment plan, therefore, there is always collaboration between treatment and education for the student to get the whole package."

Brewster said her school has regular student turnover, and many of them come to the school



Jim Trimboli helps a student with a latch-hook project at Ramey-Estep High. Trimboli has been teaching at the school for five years. "This is the best teaching job you'll ever have," Trimboli said.

with low mathematics and reading scores and with few credits toward promotion or graduation. However, the review team noted that all teachers at Ramey-Estep High meet the requirements to be considered highly qualified; use differentiated instruction and a variety of assessments; and provide "quality, intensive, individu-

alized instruction based on each student's needs."

"Our educational staff is extremely committed to the high expectations for all students regardless of their needs. I see the importance of having high expectations for my staff and students," Brewster said. "While in our school, the students are eager to learn and always wanting to know how many credits they have earned and where they stand in their education."

The review team also noted that students build relationships with the community by participating in various service projects, such as sending cards and packages to members of the United States military in Afghanistan and Iraq annually since 2006, managing a blood drive four times a year, participating in the annual Christmas parade and teaching reading at the Boyd County Early Childhood Learning Center.

Brewster said, "I do think this is extremely important for our students to learn to serve others and by doing this they are also gaining work experience and social skills."

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=AP

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High Quality Teaching and Learning

Students learn better if they know 'why'

By Matthew Tungate

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Melanie Benitez can trace her passion for teaching mathematics with real-world relevance to her high school trigonometry classroom.

"I remember asking my trigonometry teacher, 'How is any of this important to my life?' and his response was, 'It's important so you can pass into your senior year, so just do your work,'" the 5th-grade mathematics teacher and mathematics coach in her 18th year at Engelhard Elementary School (Jefferson County) said. "It was at that point that I shut down and took a downward spiral in math. If only he could have related mathematics to problem-solving. He could have told me that my life was going to be full of solving problems and that math was a tool to teach problem-solving strategies."

Teachers are responsible for showing students that what they learn in school isn't separate from the rest of their lives, she said.

"When students are enthusiastic about their learning, they can reach high levels of achievement," Benitez said. "When they can apply their knowledge to other areas, includ-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Melanie Benitez teaches 5th-grade advanced mathematics students Emrah Lomidze, left, Javier Hernandez, center, and Thomas Thykel at Engelhard Elementary School (Jefferson County). The students were finding examples of decimals, percents and fractions in the newspaper, then cutting them out and placing them on a number line.

ing their own lives, they truly understand the concepts taught to them."

This idea, called instructional relevance, prepares students for future work, focuses student learning and increases student interest and motivation, and it is a key com-

ponent of high-quality teaching and learning, according to the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Teaching and Learning.

Melissa Hutchins, a science teacher in her seventh year at West Middle School (Shelby County), said all students want to know why they have to know what they are learning.

"Making lessons relevant for each and every student allows their light bulbs to turn on and their brains to get a thrill, which is important for their emotional development," she said. "If I have engaged a student and made the lesson relevant, that which is 'deemed important' now becomes truly important to that student and will hopefully be instilled in their minds for their lifetime."

There are numerous ways to make lessons relevant to students.

Patty Johnson, a district technology integration specialist for 10 years in the Pike County school district, said technology is a great motivator. Students will often try harder on assignments when technology is present.

"Technology skills apply to everyone. (For instance) By helping students understand through technology why they need to know math because of online banking, or proper English because of texting and e-mailing, or social studies and economics because of the recession/depression our country is in, etc.," she said. "Technology can be a gateway to learning if everyday connections are made to the curriculum."

Sean Jackson, a social studies teacher in his fifth year at Mason County High School, agrees that curriculum relevancy is as close as the newspaper. He said he uses the news as a springboard into some of his discussions about civics, or about United States history. For instance, some students don't understand why they need to know the way the economy works.

"That is, until things started going bad,

Instructional Relevance

A teacher's ability to facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures.

and they wondered why people were losing their jobs, why businesses were closing and why everyone was so worried," he said. "When the economic crisis was in some of its darkest days in the past year, we had some of our most relevant lessons about how the economy works, why the government was doing what it was doing, and what we, as U.S. citizens, needed to understand in order to make the best of the situation. I have never had better lessons about the economy, and I may never again, because the students cared about a situation that had affected them and those around them very profoundly."

Hutchins teaches a unit using crime-scene investigation she calls CSI (careful scientific inquiry). Students are exposed to a "crime scene" where they must make observations, ask questions and

form a hypothesis about what happened and who is responsible.

They then design a way to test their hypothesis, gather and organize their findings and form a conclusion about the crime scene.

They finish by comparing the scenario to other real-world experience of regular people, like doctors, nurses, teachers and even

parents.

"I want my students to realize that they use scientific ways of thinking and working every day, most of the time without even knowing it," she said. "Science is the way we explain the world around us – how it all works and fits together. When I teach kids, that's my goal: to help them understand the world around them."

Benitez, the 5th-grade mathematics teacher, said the best way to make lessons relevant to students is know what they are interested in and what motivates them to learn. Then use the information gathered to guide your lesson design, she said.

(See **Students** on page 16)



Improving Instructional Relevance with the ILP

Sharon Johnston and Sherri Cluskey
KDE Program Consultants

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is an Internet-based college- and career-exploration tool students use to develop a plan for life after high school. The ILP can be accessed from school, home or anywhere the student has Internet access.

Teachers, administrators and counselors can review ILP data illustrating college and career goals of the their students. This data is critical to providing them a rigorous and relevant curriculum. Research suggests when the curriculum is relevant, students are more successful. When students are engaged in their courses and experiences, they are better able to see the connection between the content and their own goals and aspirations.

Connecting content to students' interests and abilities ensures that all students will have the opportunity to reach a high level of achievement. Students appreciate lessons that provide information that they understand and that will help them to attain their goals for the future.

Making the curriculum relevant to the students assists them in seeing how education impacts their future. When students become personally and emotionally involved in an assignment, their level of engagement increases, and true learning occurs.

MORE INFO...
www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=ILP

Districts give advice on preparing for upcoming winter-illness season

By Susan Riddell

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When you go to the Boyle County school district Web site, the most prominent item on the home page doesn't refer to the district classes, news or even some of the high school's state champion athletes.

The first thing you see is actually a "How do I" box with five items pertaining to topics such as employment and school calendars. The first item on the list, however, speaks volumes about one of the biggest concerns facing districts today.

Right at the top of the page it says, "How do I find out about the H1N1 Virus (swine flu)?"

Clicking on the link takes users to a letter from Superintendent Mike LaFavers that offers reassurance to parents who have concerns about sending their children into a potentially harmful situation.

That situation became a reality for the district in August when Junction City Elementary School closed for four days due to illnesses including the swine flu.

"In a flu outbreak, conditions change rapidly throughout the day," said David Young, principal at Junction City Elementary. "It is so important to keep your staff and parents informed. This reduces the likelihood that these groups will be misinformed, which can cause many new issues in addition to the ones the school is already working



Photo by Amy Wallot

First-grade students Lindsey Warinner, left, Kelsey Worthington, center, and Kennedy Fowler demonstrate preventative measures for fighting the flu by washing their hands at Junction City Elementary School (Boyle County).

to resolve."

Misinformation is one of the biggest obstacles districts face, and panic can spread when parents are misinformed. That's one of the reasons the Whitley County school district made prompt and reliable communication a key element in its strategic plan in dealing with illnesses.

Debbie Frazier, public information officer for the district, said administration worked with local health department officers to provide timely updates with regard to the recent H1N1 virus scares by sending out a recorded message with the One Call Now automated phone message service to all students.

"The purpose of the message

was to further inform parents and students on effective prevention and treatment techniques as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (and Prevention)," Frazier said.

Whitley County, along with the Williamsburg and Corbin Independent school districts, closed for three days during the 2008-09 school year after an influenza outbreak. The district also closed school doors in September and early October this school year.

"Attendance levels plummeted," Frazier said of the 2008-09 school year, noting that administrators start discussing school closings when attendance falls between 85 and 88 percent.

For Boyle County's Junction City

Elementary, that number fell to 75 percent attendance for both teachers and students prior to its August closing.

"We had a teacher and student (at Junction City) diagnosed with influenza type A on a Tuesday in mid-August, both in the same grade level," said Pam Tamme, Boyle County district counselor. "Initially we saw more sickness in that grade level and restricted that grade level's movement in the building and had staff come to this grade level's classrooms rather than having them go to special classes throughout the building."

"We increased disinfecting of desks and common areas throughout the day and asked teachers to send any students they suspected might be sick to the library to be screened by the district nurse. Each day of the week we saw an increase in students and staff becoming sick and an increase in students checking out to go home because they were sick (using specific screening criteria by the nurse). On Monday of the following week, hoping that we would see improvement coming off a weekend, we had approximately 25 percent of students and 25 percent of staff out sick – only at Junction City Elementary. Our other schools were maintaining satisfactory attendance at about 94 percent."

With the school closed temporarily due to the illnesses, including

strep throat and stomach viruses, Boyle County kicked in its intervention plan based on a stop-light approach.

A green light signifies all schools as healthy.

District schools followed procedures under yellow light when Junction City Elementary closed in August, but the school itself went into red light mode.

"Much of what is in this district plan is direct recommendations from the CDC," Tamme said. "However, some of the steps were added as a result of our experience at Junction City Elementary while the school was on 'red.'"

Under the yellow light, schools in the Boyle County school district, aside from Junction City Elementary, had designated times for hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers. If a student showed any signs of an illness, that student's desk/area was immediately cleaned after he or she left.

When Junction City Elementary was under a red light, the school officials used surgical masks, increased social distances between students by having them move desks away from each other, discouraged sharing any items and limited teaching new content.

"Our teachers were outstanding," Young said. "To the greatest extent possible, they continued teaching new content.

(See **Districts** on page 15)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Karen Erwin, education school nurse consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), recommends district personnel check the KDE H1N1 virus update site frequently. Here's a look at some frequently asked questions about the H1N1 virus.

What is the H1N1 virus and who is at risk?

The H1N1 is a type of influenza (flu) virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people. The H1N1 virus is thought to spread the same way the seasonal flu is spread, through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. The virus may spread when persons touch respiratory droplets on hard surfaces and objects then touch their mouths, noses and eyes.

Children are a major source of the spread of disease. They shed the greatest amount of virus and pose the greatest risk of transmission. Furthermore, school settings mix children from different communities in a compact environment.

What are the signs and symptoms of the H1N1 virus?

- sudden onset of illness
- fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius)
- chills
- cough
- headache
- sore throat
- stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion – more common in children

Students and school staff should stay home when they have any of the above symptoms. Symptoms may last for up to seven days after they first begin. Individuals with influenza-like illness should remain home for at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

How can I prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus?

The same steps used to prevent the common cold and seasonal flu virus apply when trying to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus. The following are some general steps that schools and families can follow:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (long enough for children to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).
- If soap and water is not available, apply half a teaspoon of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to the palm of the hand. Rub hands together, covering all surfaces until hands are dry.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of the elbow. Dispose of tissue immediately.
- Stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Avoid touching the eyes, mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

- Avoid crowded places where people are confined in an indoor space.

What if I'm exposed?

Anyone exposed to the H1N1 virus should do the following:

- If you are sick, stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- If you have a fever, difficulty breathing, a cough, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, you should talk with a health care provider by phone.
- Your health care provider will determine whether testing or treatment is needed.
- Before visiting a health care setting, tell the provider about your symptoms and that you may have been exposed to the H1N1 virus.
- Do not travel while sick, and limit your contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of illness.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Let KDE know what you think

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday wants to know what you think about the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) through an online customer survey. At Commissioner Holliday's request, all KDE employees have included a link to the survey in any e-mail or written response provided to individuals who contact the agency seeking information. This will enable KDE to collect data related to its responsiveness and adjust work accordingly. All responses will remain anonymous. Visit the link listed below to complete the customer survey.

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=KDECS

KSBA adopts revised Code of Ethical Conduct for school board members

The Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) Board of Directors has revised and readopted the association's Code of Ethical Conduct for School Board Members. The action came at the KSBA board's recent quarterly meeting in Frankfort.

First adopted in 1999, the code is designed to spell out the ethical targets for board members in representing their constituents in particular and public education in general.

The lone amendment recommended by the board's External/Member Relations Committee encourages ongoing education and comprehension by board members about advances in educational practices and programs that come before the board, either for action or for informational purposes.

To view the new Code of Ethical Conduct for Kentucky School Board members, visit www.ksba.org/code-of-ethical-conduct.

NSBA says new Title I school improvement funding has strings

From the National School Boards Association (NSBA)

The U.S. Department of Education recently proposed requirements for states in awarding \$3.5 billion in Title I school improvement funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to school districts.

Recently, Education Commissioner Terry Holliday announced that Kentucky would be eligible for \$45 million this fiscal year in new Title I school improvement funds.

This program would work alongside similar provisions in the Race to the Top initiative and would apply to all states that want

to participate in the funding.

Most of these proposed requirements call for governance changes in school districts and schools as strategies to turn around schools identified for improvement. Similar to the Race to the Top draft guidelines the department released in July, these proposed school improvement interventions include adopting a new governance structure, school closure, conversion to charter schools and hiring management companies to operate schools. NSBA has expressed serious concerns over these same types of proposed requirements in Race to the Top comments submitted recently.

Title I school improvement grants are funded by \$546 million in the fiscal year 2009 appropriations and an additional \$3 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. School improvement grants are awarded to states that provide subgrants to school districts that apply for those funds.

In the proposed requirements, the department prescribes how funding should be awarded to school districts. States would award subgrants to school districts that agree to adopt one of the following four models:

- Turnaround Model – replace the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff, adopt a new governance structure and a new instructional program, extend the school day and year, etc.
- Restart Model – close the school and reopen it as a charter school or hire a management company to operate the school. The restart school must admit, within the grades it serves, all the former students who wish to attend.
- School Closure – close the school and transfer its students to higher-performing schools in the district.
- Transformations Model – districts would address four areas:
 1. replace school leadership, develop and reward teacher and leader effectiveness
 2. adopt comprehensive instructional programs
 3. extend learning time and teacher planning time and provide community-oriented services
 4. provide operating flexibility and intensive support

The department also requires states to identify schools in three categories when awarding subgrants: (These are federal, not Kentucky, "tiers.")

- Tier I – the lowest-achieving 5 percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in a state, or the 5 lowest-performing Title I schools,

whichever number is greater

- Tier II – low-achieving secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds
 - Tier III – the remaining Title I schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring that are not Tier I schools
- Additional requirements and information on waiver:
- Any school districts with nine or more schools in school improvement will not

be allowed to use any single strategy (mentioned above) in more than half of its schools.

- A state could seek a waiver from the department to allow a school that implements a Turnaround or Restart Model to exit school improvement and restart the school improvement clock under ESEA. The school would not be required to offer public school choice or supplemental educational services.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Award-winning recognition

Kentucky Board of Education Chairman Joe Brothers hugs Johnnie Grissom after presenting her with the inaugural Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award – Strive for Achievement Through Instructional Equity at the state board meeting on Oct. 7. The award will be presented annually to an individual or group with outstanding accomplishments to help all students achieve at high levels through instructional equity and to closing the achievement gap. The award was established to honor the work and dedication of Grissom, a long-time Kentucky Department of Education employee, who serves as associate commissioner of the Office of Special Instructional Services.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Calloway County Preschool

Announcement

Commonwealth Connection for 2009-10

Kentucky local, state and federal employees and retirees, including teachers, can take a quick getaway while enjoying the unique beauty and history in nearby state parks. The Kentucky State Parks' Commonwealth Connection program offers reduced rates on lodge rooms and cottages at their Kentucky locations. This discount is good from Nov. 1, through March 31, 2010.

- lodge room - \$44.95
- 1BR cottage - \$74.95
- 2BR cottage - \$84.95
- 3BR cottage - \$94.95

www.parks.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

Exceptional children

The Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (KCEC) is hosting the 44th annual Kentucky Exceptional Children's Conference Nov. 22-24 in Louisville. Also, those on Facebook can join the KCEC Facebook page to connect with local families, teachers and administrators.

www.kycec.us

Student writers

The Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning will host student writing workshops Nov. 11 and 18 in Lexington. These workshops focus on inspiration, revision, literature and peer critiques. Participants will have the opportunity to meet active professional writers, artists and musicians in the community and will join in an event to showcase their work. Those interested can register by phone at (859) 254-4175. For more information, contact Jessica Fisher, marketing@carnegieliteracy.org, at (859) 494-2034.

www.carnegieliteracy.org

Contests & Other Events

Kentucky Reading Project

Teachers in grades K-5 can apply for the Kentucky Reading Project (KRP), which is a year-long, graduate-level course in reading instruction that includes a two-week summer institute, four follow-up visits and a coaching visit by a KRP director. Each state university serves as a site for KRP, and only 25 teachers are selected for each site. In some years, KRP is held at an off-site location that is centrally located for the teachers who are attending. Applications and information will

be available after Jan. 1, 2010, on the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development Web site. Contact Cary Pappas at cary.pappas@uky.edu for more information.

www.kentuckyliteracy.org

Kentucky Military Treasures

"Kentucky Military Treasures: Selections from the Kentucky Historical Society Collections" will open on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History in Frankfort. Even those well-versed in military history can learn more about Kentuckians' contributions in the service by experiencing this exhibition. Spanning nearly 200 years of conflicts – from the War of 1812 to more recent engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq – "Kentucky Military Treasures" shares the personal stories of Kentuckians who fought and sometimes lost their lives in these battles. Visitors will see the many machines and other trappings of the military service, learn how regular Kentuckians became heroes and listen as veterans tell their stories in their own words.

www.history.ky.gov

StageLab opportunities

StageLab, based in Louisville, is offering several upcoming professional development opportunities including "Approaching Shakespeare" Jan. 18. This workshop is designed for language arts and drama teachers and media specialists in middle and high school grades.

<http://stagelablouisville.googlepages.com>

Science pilot program

NanoTeach is recruiting teachers for a year-long, nationwide pilot program starting in the summer of 2010. Using the *Designing Effective Science Instruction* (DESI) framework, teachers will learn to integrate nanoscience and technology content (NS&T) into their existing curricula. Through lessons and experiences that model the DESI instructional framework, participants will investigate dynamic NS&T content while delving into strategies that support effective science teaching. Important dates for this program include:

- Nov. 17, 5 p.m. NanoTeach Question-and-Answer webinar
- Jan. 8, 2010 pilot test applications due
- July 12–23, 2010 NanoTeach commences with two-weeks of professional development in Denver

www.mcrel.org/NanoTeach/Recruiting

Videos can earn national recognition

The Student Video Network (SVN) initiative at eSN.TV is giving students the opportunity to earn valuable video-production experience and a shot at national recognition for their efforts.

www.eSchoolNews.TV

www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=56745

Slogan and essay contest

The Office of the Secretary of State is holding an annual slogan and essay contest for Kentucky students. The Kentucky Education Association (KEA) will once again sponsor the contest, along with the Scripps Howard First Amendment Center at the University of Kentucky and KEA Retired. Prizes will be awarded for first-, second- and third-place winners in the slogan contest, which is open to all students in grades 6-8. A first-place prize will be awarded for each high school grade level in the essay contest. All entries must be postmarked or electronically submitted by Nov. 20. Contact Patrick Keal, patrick.keal@ky.gov, or at (502) 564-3490 for more information.

www.civics.ky.gov/educators/students/contest.htm

Character education recognition

Every year, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) selects approximately 10 schools and districts as National Schools of Character (NSOC) for their excellence in character development. Those interested can apply to be recognized in the 2010 National/State Schools of Character awards program. National award winners receive a grant to fulfill their role as ambassadors of character education. They present at CEP's National Forum on Character Education and provide staff development and mentoring for other educators. CEP honors the NSOC at its National Forum on Character Education. CEP writes articles about the NSOC for its annual publication and showcases the winners on the CEP Web site. Application deadline is Dec. 1.

www.character.org

World Equestrian Games

Next year, Kentucky will host the Alltech FEI 2010 World Equestrian Games (WEG), which are expected to attract 600,000 visitors to the state. To help promote the WEG and

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BULLETIN BOARD *(continued)*

create an awareness of the horse industry and its many career opportunities, schools are invited to attend a special Equine Youth Festival on March 19, 2010. In addition to a presentation throughout the day of the eight events of the WEG, the festival will offer hands-on educational activities and demonstrations for children of all ages. This will be a good opportunity for students to be exposed to the many careers available to them in the horse industry, one of Kentucky's signature industries. For more information, contact Pat Trotter in the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Leadership and School Improvement at (502) 564-2116.

Resources

Data on school closings

The Cabinet for Family and Health Services has posted a Web page that will list school closings related to the flu. It will be updated each morning and will reflect data collected by midnight of the previous day.

<http://healthalerts.ky.gov/Pages/Flu-RelatedSchoolClosures.aspx>

Free disability awareness curriculum

Elementary school educators now have a new, free teaching tool to help young students learn about children and adults with disabilities. Easter Seals has launched an online version of its award-winning disability awareness curriculum, "Friends Who Care," that is designed to help children better understand what it means and how it feels to be a young person with a disability. This hands-on educational program gives students the opportunity to learn what is involved when someone has a disability and how kids with disabilities adapt to live life, go to school, make friends and play. All can be downloaded separately for use at home or in the classroom.

www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_friendswhocare

NEXT – Your Future After High School

Copies of the eighth-annual edition of *The Lane Report's NEXT – Your Future After High School* in Kentucky will be arriving at schools in early December.

The magazine is designed to encourage high school students to think about their future careers and make plans to continue their education. Copies of *NEXT* can be distributed directly to students, and guidance

counselors should use the publication as a resource for students to explore the options available to them.

Contact Dick Kelly at dickkelly@lanereport.com for more information.

Information on sexting

Sexting is sending sexually explicit text messages or photographs via mobile devices. Sometimes teens share the photographs voluntarily, but at other times teens may be coerced into taking or sending the photographs. Once the photos are sent, some kids use them to bully, harass, intimidate or embarrass victims online or via mobile devices. The Kentucky Center for School Safety's Web site offers multiple resources on sexting.

www.kysafeschools.org/sexting.html

Graphical search engine

Eyeplorer is a new way to search, called a graphical search engine. The tool is especially useful for students as it gives other words that are associated with the searched topic. There is a tutorial on the site that explains how it works and the advantages of searching using this tool.

<http://eyeplorer.com/show>

Wordle for students

Wordle is a computer program for generating "word clouds" from text that students provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. This could be used as an evaluation or reflection tool by asking for a word from students who describe the topic or presentation. Enter the words in to Wordle, and it will create a graphic.

www.wordle.net

Districts from page 12

They prepared missed work for those students and kept good communication with their parents in order to help the students be successful. In some classrooms, however, the number of absent students became so great that it was difficult to continue teaching new content. In these instances, teachers used the time to do extensive review and extensions of learning.

"We do a great job with formative assessments, so we continually have a good deal of data on hand to use when making instructional decisions," Young added. "It was such a tough time for our school, but it was an excellent opportunity to provide small-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Moving slowly

Students in Donna Stinson's preschool class watch a turtle outside during recess at Southgate Elementary School (Southgate Independent). Older students found the turtle outside and shared the find with the preschool class. Stinson was able to turn their find into an impromptu mini-lesson about the turtle's habitat and eating habits.

group intervention to students who were struggling and extensions for students who were mastering the content."

To make the most of the time when students were away from school, Tamme said it was critical for teachers and administrators to stay on the same page.

"The Junction City Elementary staff had several after-school meetings during the days leading up to closure," Tamme said. "The principal updated them on information at that time and educated them on strategies to take as the situation unfolded."

Tamme suggests districts that face this choice keep in mind the well-being of the students.

"What is best for the kids is at the heart of this decision (to close school)," Tamme said. "(Administrators) should recognize that in difficult times, they have wonderful staff willing to step up and get outside of their typical job responsibilities to do whatever it takes to get through the emergency."

MORE INFO...

Karen Erwin, karen.erwin@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-5625

Pam Tamme, pam.tamme@boyle.kyschools.us, (859) 936-7502

Debbie Frazier, debbie.frazier@whitley.kyschools.us, (606) 549-7876



Photo by Amy Wallot

Mock history trials

Teacher Brian Rich helps students in his Advanced Placement European History class prepare for an assignment in the library at Ballard High School (Jefferson County). Students are seniors Ben Randall, left, Justin Appurson, center, and John Jackson. The students were preparing for mock trials of Galileo and Louis XIV.

Students from page 11

"Look around the community and find ways to relate content to the area in which they live," Benitez said. "Show them why it's important to learn the concepts you teach and how those concepts will contribute to their success in the world. Encourage your grade group team or vertical team to help in unit design. It takes less time when we work together."

For instance, the Ohio River runs through downtown Louisville, where most of her students live. The students had to construct a barge that would hold a set volume of coal. They related volume to geometry in that they had to design the barge from a flat cereal box by drawing a net with proper measurements. They finished construction and tested their barges with "coal," which was really black beans.

"When these types of lessons are designed, students are engaged and take ownership of their learning," Benitez said. "They also seem to understand the concepts at higher levels and retain the information throughout the year."

Johnson suggested teachers find out what technologies are available in their school or district to help make instruction more relevant to students.

"It is very important for educators to understand that we are teaching students in a different world than what we were raised in as children," she said. "Educators have to be willing to embrace our changing world with optimism. Classroom use of technology is not meant to replace the teacher but to enhance learning. If integrated correctly, it can make a world of difference for everyone in the classroom and beyond".

Jackson, who uses iPods in his social studies classroom, said teachers can increase their instructional relevance by asking one question: "If I didn't know about this, how could someone make it important to me?"

"It sounds simple because it is. We are trained professionals, and we are already lovers of learning, but if we weren't, how would we want someone to try to reach us?" he asked. "Answering this question is not easy, and I can't always answer it about every lesson I teach, but just trying to answer it, and making the effort for these students, is better than leaving someone to learn alone."

MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=HQTL

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New KET resource takes mathematics students on virtual road trip

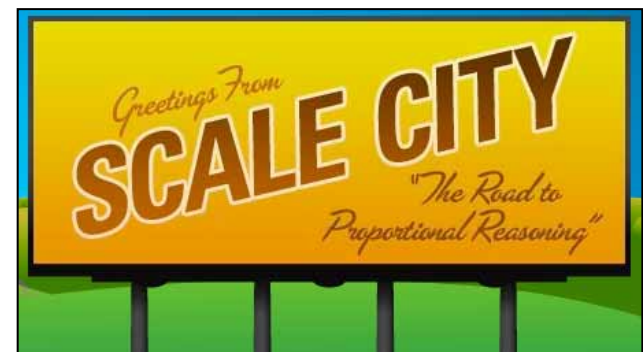
This fall, KET unveiled a new online resource for middle school mathematics students and teachers. *Scale City: The Road to Proportional Reasoning* at www.scalecity.org takes students on a virtual road trip to interesting and unusual Kentucky sites.

Along the way, students explore proportional reasoning with an emphasis on the mathematics of scale and scaling through engaging videos and interactive exploration.

The brief videos form the basis for eight interactive simulations. These interactive exercises encourage students to explore the math introduced in the video and then apply it to problems.

Additional resources on the Web site include lesson plans, adaptations and extensions, classroom handouts and activities, vocabulary, resource lists and ideas for incorporating *Scale City* into instruction. This free resource is accessible on the Web, and DVD-Rom versions of the Web site will be sent to schools later this fall.

Scale City was developed in partnership with Alabama, Arkansas and Maryland public television networks and funded by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The three partner networks have produced their own online middle grades mathematics resources, which also will be available free to Kentucky schools.



Graphic Courtesy of Kentucky Educational Television

MORE INFO...

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